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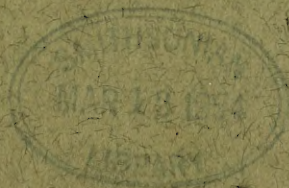
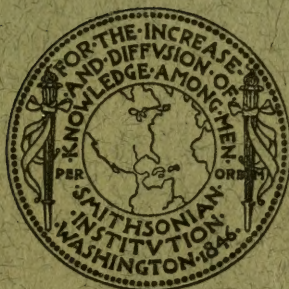
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BULLETIN 152

Index to
Schoolcraft's "Indian Tribes
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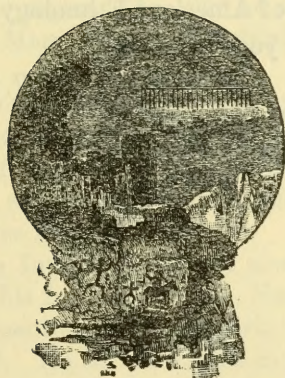
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FRANCES S. NICHOLS



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FRANCES S. NICHOLS



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,
Washington, D. C., January 15, 1951.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a manuscript entitled "Index to Schoolcraft's 'Indian Tribes of the United States'," compiled by Frances S. Nichols, and to recommend that it be published as a bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

Very respectfully yours,

M. W. STIRLING, *Director.*

DR. ALEXANDER WETMORE,
Secretary, Smithsonian Institution.

INTRODUCTION

One hundred years ago, on July 22, 1850, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft submitted for publication the first volume of his treatise on the Indian tribes of the United States. This volume was issued in 1851 under the title "Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, Collected and prepared under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, per act of Congress of March 3, 1847."

Schoolcraft,¹ born on March 28, 1793, in Albany County, N. Y., attended public school in Hamilton, N. Y., and at the age of 15 entered Union College. Later he attended Middlebury College, where he showed great interest in linguistics and the natural sciences, particularly geology and mineralogy. In 1817 at Utica, N. Y., he wrote a book on glassmaking, that being the occupation of his father. His first explorations were in the Indian country of southern Missouri and Arkansas, where he studied the mineral resources in 1817-18. He published a book on the lead mines of Missouri in 1819. In 1820 he was a member of the Cass Expedition to the upper Mississippi and the Lake Superior copper region. In 1832 he made another expedition to the sources of the Mississippi, and published detailed accounts of both journeys.

His travels in out-of-the-way places led to a strong interest in the Indians. In recognition of this, in 1822 he was appointed Indian agent for the tribes of Lake Superior. In 1823 he married a quarter-blood Chippewa girl, who though educated in Europe had lived much of her life in the native way.

His interest in the Indians increased steadily and he soon made the study of Indians his full-time work. Needing data on the Indian problem, the Government made him Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Michigan in 1836. He served in this capacity until 1841, during which period he negotiated several treaties with the Chippewa, including the important treaty of March 28, 1836, whereby the United States obtained title to the northern third of the lower peninsula and the eastern half of the upper peninsula of Michigan. In 1828 he helped found the Historical Society of Michigan and in 1832 the Algic Society of Detroit.²

¹ A detailed biography of Schoolcraft is to be found in "Schoolcraft-Longfellow-Hawatha," by Chase S. Osborn and Stellanova Osborn, Lancaster, 1942.

² Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 16, New York, 1935.

Schoolcraft was a prolific writer and produced an impressive list of titles, mostly dealing with travel and Indian customs. Some of the more important of these are "Algie Researches," a 2-volume account of Indian mental characteristics published in 1839; "Oneota," describing the Indian history and prospects, published in 1844-45; and "Personal Memories of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes," published in 1851. These works were of a literary rather than a scientific nature. Feeling strongly that the material he had collected should be made available for scientific study, he projected an Indian encyclopedia, but this was set aside for another project which was made possible for him through Government subsidy.

In accordance with an act of Congress approved March 3, 1847, the Secretary of War appointed Schoolcraft "to collect and digest such statistics and materials as may illustrate the history, the present condition, and future prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States."

The first volume, issued in 1851, was followed by others in rapid succession, and by 1857 the publication of the entire set of six folio volumes had been completed. Copiously illustrated by Capt. Seth Eastman, this work under Government auspices was the first authoritative general compendium on the American Indian.

In compiling his material, Schoolcraft drew upon the knowledge of the leading specialists from different areas. Traders, missionaries, Indian agents, and others who had spent a great part of their lives with the Indians generously furnished him with detailed information in response to his officially sanctioned requests.

His first act in preparation for his task was to draw up a circular under the sponsorship of the Office of Indian Affairs entitled "Inquiries, Respecting the History, Present Condition, and Future Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States." The first of several editions of this circular was issued in July 1847, in accordance with the provisions of section 5, chapter 66, of the Laws of the Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, and approved March 3, 1847, which read, "*And be it further enacted*, That in aid of the means now possessed by the Department of Indian Affairs through its existing organization, there be, and hereby is, appropriated the sum of five thousand dollars to enable the said department, under the direction of the Secretary of War to collect and digest such statistics and material as may illustrate the history, the present condition, and future prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States."

The original circular recites that it was addressed to four classes of individuals, namely, "I. Persons holding positions under the department, who are believed to have it in their power to impart much practical information respecting the tribes who are, respectively,

under their charge. II. Persons who have retired from similar situations, travelers in the Indian Territory, or partners and factors on the American frontiers. III. Men of learning or research who have perused the best writers on the subject and who may feel willing to communicate the results of their reading or reflections. IV. Teachers and missionaries to the aborigines."

The circular closes with an expression of the "anxiety which is felt to give the materials collected the character of entire authenticity, and to be apprised of any erroneous views in the actual manners and customs, character, and condition of our Indian tribes which may have been promulgated. The Government, it is believed, owes it to itself to originate a body of facts on this subject of an entirely authentic character, from which the race at large may be correctly judged by all classes of citizens, and its policy respecting the tribes under its guardianship, and its treatment of them, properly understood and appreciated."

The 348 inquiries in the circular embrace the history (and archeology), the tribal organization, the religion, the manners and customs, the intellectual capacity and character, the present condition, the future prospects, and the language, of the Indian tribes of the United States.³

In 1851, as stated above, the first of the six volumes of "Historical and Statistical Information" appeared. This important work, which did so much to crystallize the thinking of students of the American Indian during the formative years of anthropology in this country, has fallen into general disuse as a reference work during the present generation. This has been due in part to the general supposition that its contents, particularly as to theory, have become antiquated, and also to the fact that the huge bulk of material is badly organized. Lacking an index, the task of looking up particular topics has tended to frighten away would-be researchers.

Despite its faults, this opus will always remain a mine of source material. At the time of its compilation, aboriginal culture in the United States, although rapidly disintegrating, was still a living, vital reality. This was particularly true of the tribes west of the Mississippi, which were just beginning to feel the effects of the encroachment of white civilization. The bulk of the material reflects the direct observations of intelligent men who knew the Indians through long contact with them.

Mrs. Nichols, whose long experience on the editorial staff of the Bureau of American Ethnology well fitted her for the task, is to be

³ Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri, by Edwin Thompson Denig, edited by J. N. B. Hewitt, 46th Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1930.

congratulated for completing the tedious chore of indexing these books. It is to be hoped that the publication of this index will restore to more general use this now neglected classic on the American Indians.

MATTHEW W. STIRLING,

Director, Bureau of American Ethnology.

INDEX TO SCHOOLCRAFT'S "INDIAN TRIBES OF THE UNITED STATES"

Compiled by FRANCES S. NICHOLS

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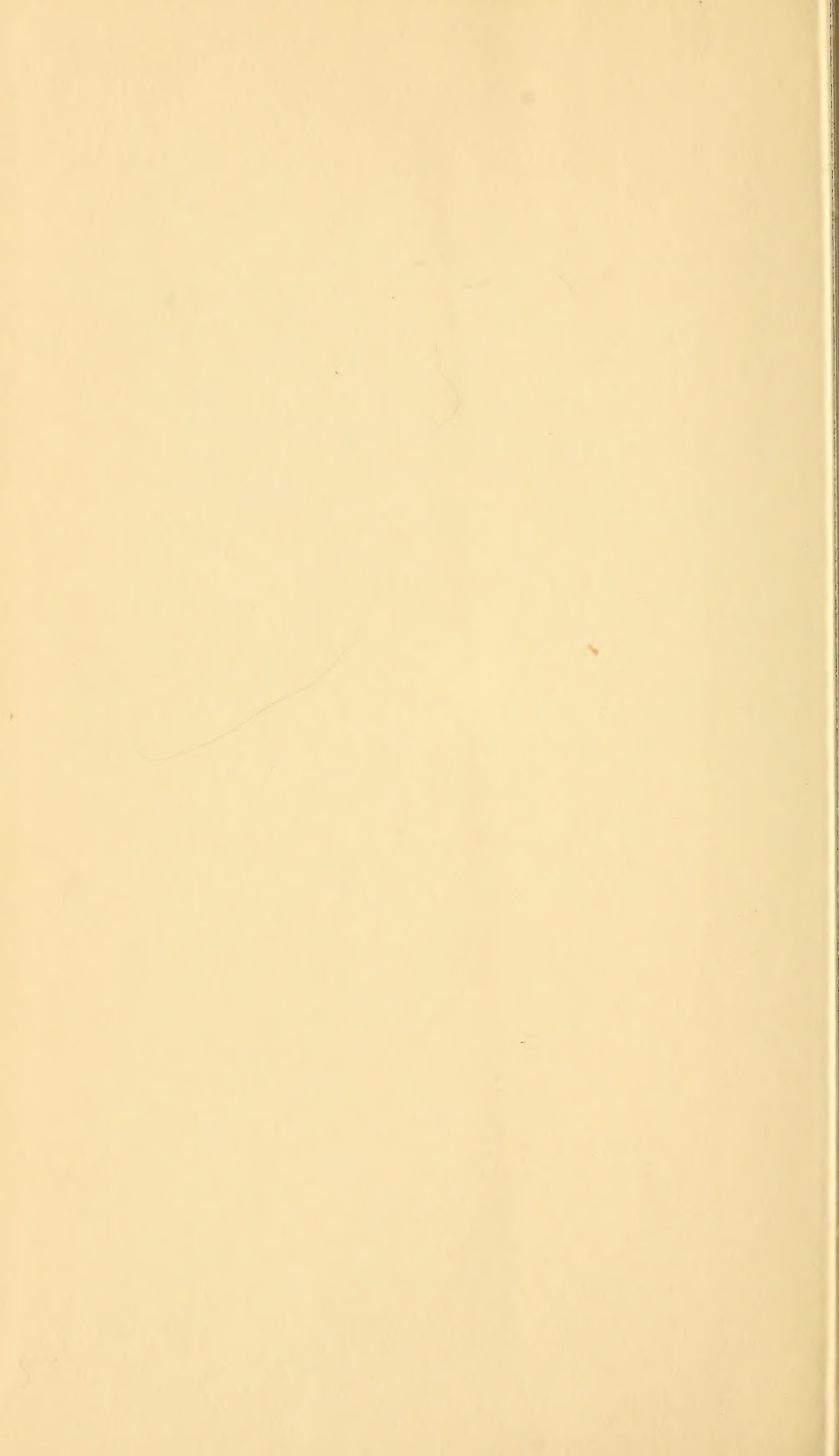
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